

THE SNAIL IN GOTHIC MARGINAL WARFARE

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TOWARDS the end of the thirteenth century there emerged in the margins of North French illuminated manuscripts a motif whose meaning and origin have not yet been fully clarified. The motif depicts a man combatting a snail (Fig. 1). Appearing a few years later also in Flemish and English marginal illumination, the theme and variants thereof were represented with notable frequency throughout the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Its humorous and satirical implications, perfectly adapted to the predominant spirit of Gothic *drôleries*, do not suffice to explain its popularity, particularly since its introduction into the margins marked the beginning of an artistic tradition which persisted throughout the Middle Ages.

Considered for the present study are over seventy marginal representations of the theme culled from twenty-nine manuscripts.¹ Of these, the majority — eleven North French, seven Franco-Flemish, and four English examples — were produced between about 1290 and 1310. Of the remainder, illuminated between about 1310 and 1325, three are Flemish, three are English, and only one is North French, reflecting a waning of interest in the motif, particularly in France. The manuscripts, which include psalters, hours, breviaries, pontificals, and decretals as well as a *Lancelot du Lac*, a *Tristram*, and a *Recueil de poésies morales*, range in artistic quality from relatively provincial works with limited ornamentation to superb productions with elaborate marginal programs. A feature common to both groups of manuscripts, however, is a distinct preference for travesty, genre, and literary themes rather than for fantastic imagery or grotesquerie. Although apparently unrelated to immediately adjoining illustrations or textual passages, the motif often appears in marginal programs dominated by *monde renversé* themes involving men and hares.² This is the case, for instance, in the first volume of the breviary of Marguerite de Bar (British Museum, Yates Thompson MS. 8),³ the closely related pontifical for Reynaud de Bar (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS. 298),⁴ and the Gorleston psalter (British Museum, Add. MS. 49622).⁵ The relatively frequent depiction of snail combats in English marginal illumination is noteworthy as themes of this type are proportionately far rarer in English manuscripts than on the continent.

¹ For the content and location of the manuscripts, see the appended list. Specific references to snail-combat representations will appear in my iconographic index of Gothic marginal illustrations to be completed in the near future.

² In view of the delineation of cowardice in French epics discussed below (pp. 363 ff.) the depiction of snail combats in the margins of such manuscripts may have been inspired by the text. J. F. Champfleury mentions five or six such illustrations in an unspecified *Histoire de St. Graal* in the Bibliothèque Nationale (*Histoire de la caricature au moyen âge* [Paris, 1875], p. 41).

³ M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Fifty Manuscripts in the Collection of H. Y. Thompson* (Cambridge, England, 1898), pp. 142 ff.

⁴ E. S. Dewick, *The Metz Pontifical* (London, 1902).

⁵ S. Cockerell, *The Gorleston Psalter* (London, 1907).

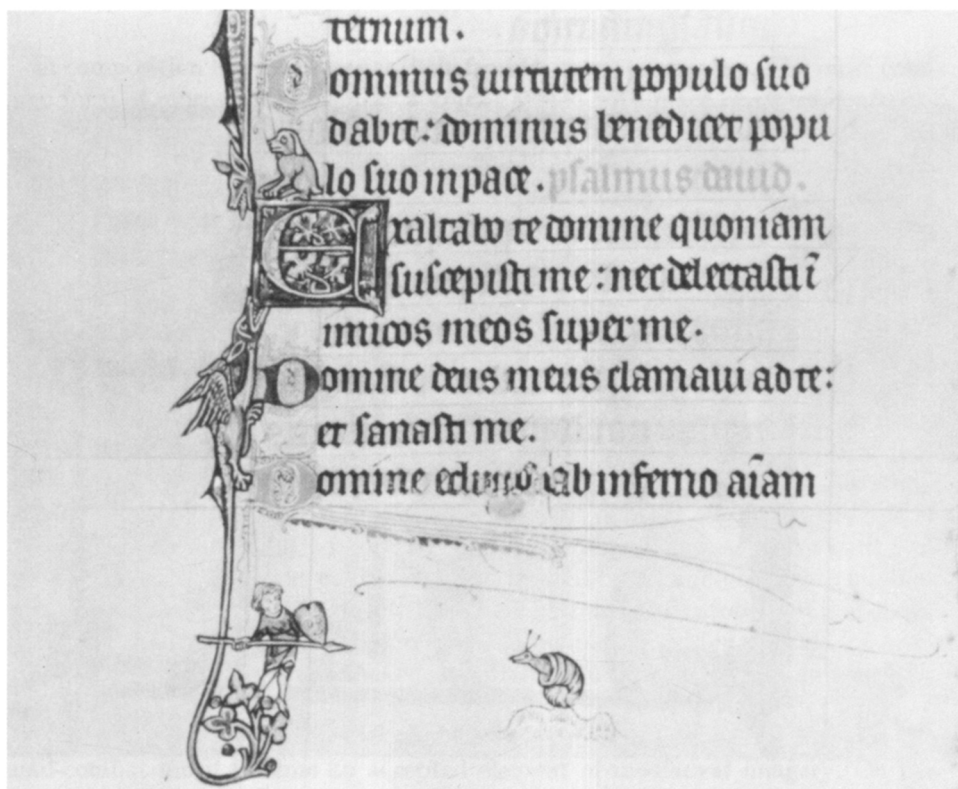


FIG. 1. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 45, fol. 52v. Man fighting snail.



FIG. 2. New Haven, Yale University Library, *Lancelot du Lac*, fol. 169. Knight astride rearing horse opposing snail.

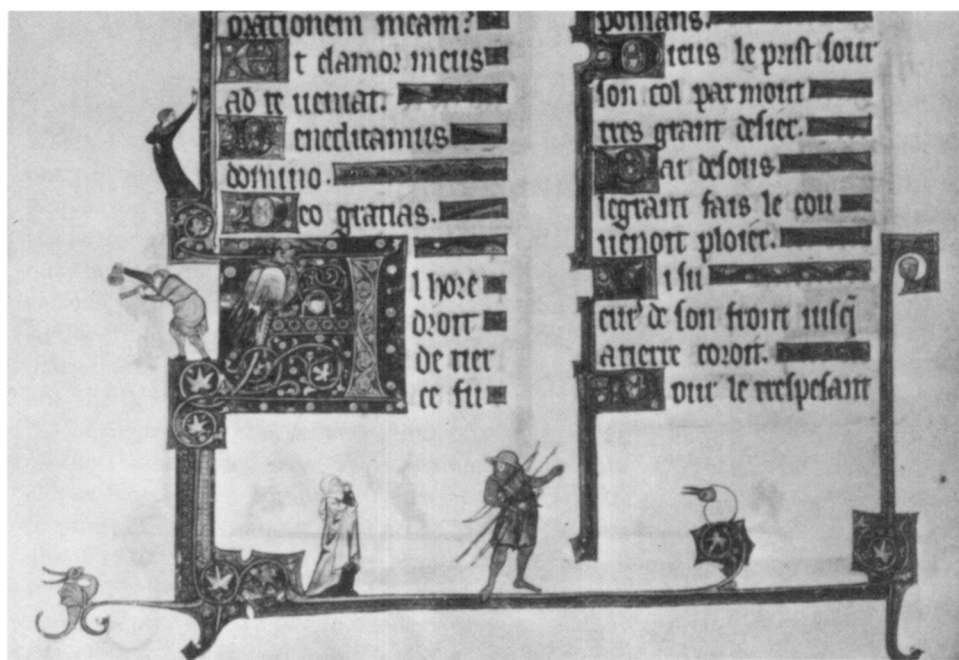


FIG. 3. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS latin 14284, fol. 15v. Woman imploring knight not to combat snail.



FIG. 4. New York, William S. Glazier collection, *Voeux du Paon*, fol. 52v. Viper with human head in jaws, resembling snail configuration.

In composition the motif varies little from country to country. The most common form of representation shows a knight armed with mace or sword confronting a snail whose horns are extended and often pointed like arrows (Fig. 2). Equally frequent an adversary is a man in a short tunic, or occasionally nude, bearing an axe, spear, sword, or slingshot. In one instance a nude woman opposes the snail with spear and shield. Numerous scenes of a knight dropping his sword or kneeling submissively before his diminutive foe accentuate the satirical implications of the motif, as do several representations of women beseeching a knight not to attack the formidable beast (Fig. 3). There are many variations with hybrid men or animals substituted for human combatants. Typical examples are an ape armed with sword or crossbow or on horseback with a spear; a cat stalking a snail with the head of a mouse;⁶ a dog, dragon, ram, or even a hare in fierce opposition. The fox fleeing from the snail presents an amusing example of parodied *monde renversé*. Interestingly enough, of the scenes included in this study only five are of a pacific nature. Since they illustrate other aspects of the role of the snail in marginal art, they may be described briefly: a man astride a snail pursuing a stag, a resplendent gold snail being treated by an ape-physician, another pulling a winekeg on a cart, two snails with monstrous heads atop a series of steps, and three snails ascending a ladder.⁷ Also to be mentioned for the sake of completeness is a host of unembroidered snails, often pounced upon by a crane or other large bird.

Within a short period after its profuse emergence in manuscript margins the snail-combat motif became an accepted element of mediaeval imagery. On the façade of Lyon cathedral, for example, there appear two reliefs of a knight opposing a snail and a man threatening a dog-headed snail with an axe.⁸ A marginal snail combat in a manuscript written and illuminated in a Genoese monastery attests further to the wide diffusion of the theme at the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century.⁹ It is even possible that in this instance the motif was transmitted directly via a northern intermediary, since the founder of the monastery, Leonardo de' Fieschi, owned a Cambrai psalter, acquired during his provostship of St-Donatien in Bruges from 1295 to 1304, containing no less than six variant representations of the theme. Without firsthand examination of the Genoese manuscript this supposition must remain purely conjectural.

Like many other subjects popularized in marginal illumination of about 1300, the snail combat gradually disappeared in the course of the fourteenth century, to be revived once more with special applicability to contemporary events at the end of the fifteenth century. Thus it was used in an illustration from the *Grand Compost et Calendrier des Bergers* to ridicule the recently established peasant

⁶ For numerous examples of snail configurations of this type, see Jean Baltrusaitis, *Le moyen âge fantastique* (Paris, 1955), pp. 56 ff.

⁷ These last two may be illustrations of a winding staircase, still termed "escalier de limaçon" in contemporary French usage.

⁸ L. Bégule, *La cathédrale de Lyon* (Lyon, 1913), p. 66.

⁹ A. Novati, *Attraverso il Medio Evo* (Bari, 1905), p. 134. On the founding of the monastery, San Leonardo of Carignano, and a brief biography of its founder, Leonardo de' Fieschi, see L. M. C. Randall, "The Fieschi Psalter," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, xxiii (1960), pp. 27-47.

militia, here depicted assailing a large snail reposing on a grape leaf:

Lymasson pour tes grandes cornes,
 Le chasteau ne lairrons d'assaillir,
 Et si pouvons te ferons fuyr
 De ce beau lieu où tu reposes:
 Oncques Lombard ne te manges,
 A telle sauce que nous ferons
 Nous te mettrons dans un beau plat
 Au puyvre et aux oignons . . . ¹⁰

While the principal connotation of the motif appears to be the derision, or the exemplification, of human cowardice, other interpretations have been proposed. Perhaps the earliest is that of the Comte de Bastard, who termed the emergence of the snail from its shell "certainement relative à la résurrection" on finding an archer shooting a snail depicted on the same page as a miniature of the raising of Lazarus in two French Books of Hours of the fourteenth and fifteenth century respectively.¹¹ While this hypothesis deserves consideration, it must be regarded somewhat warily in view of another elucidation in the same article ascribing symbolic significance to a humorous grotesque. Upon encountering a human-headed quadruped with an exceptionally long neck in the margin of a thirteenth-century French breviary, De Bastard was about to attribute this creature, which he termed very unusual, "à la main d'un enlumineur en délire" until he read in the adjacent text: "Hodie miles [stephanus] de tabernaculo corporis exiens triumphator migravit ad coelum." In view of the rarity of the strange quadruped, says De Bastard, there can be no doubt that it was intended as an illustration of the saint's apotheosis. Yet long-necked quadrupeds were a common feature of marginal decoration, far more so than the snail-combat. Another *raison d'être* for the latter was proposed by Champfleury, who cited the snail's voracity in the vineyard as a possible explanation for its universal unpopularity.¹² To Maeterlinck the theme had broader implications, reflecting the struggle between the lower classes and the aristocracy.¹³

Without ruling out the possible validity of these interpretations, the main implication of the motif, human cowardice or *Ignavia*, must be examined more closely. In the thirteenth-century Virtue and Vice cycles of Notre Dame, Amiens, and Chartres, for instance, this theme is illustrated by a man dropping his sword

¹⁰ C. Nisard, *Histoire des livres populaires* (Paris, 1864), I, 146-147. For another late mediaeval mockery of a knight's terror before a snail, see A. Pollard, *English Miracle-plays, Moralities, and Interludes* (Oxford, 1890), pp. 126-145. Prof. Horst Janson called to my attention a further example of the snail's popularity as a gustatory delicacy, a miniature in Ulrich von Richental's *Chronik des Constanzer Concils, 1414/1418* showing delegates to the council purchasing snails at the fish market. See *Rosgarten Museum, Konstanz*, I (1956), no. 16.

¹¹ *Bulletin des comités historiques*, II (1850), 172 ff.

¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 40-41. The author cites a draughtsman of about 1320 in the British Museum collection showing a knight fighting a snail with a spear.

¹³ L. Maeterlinck, *Le genre satirique dans la peinture flamande* (Brussels, 1907), pp. 55-56, fig. 69. For another interpretation, see G. Baist, "Assaillir la limace," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, II (1878), 305.

before a hare.¹⁴ A lesser known contemporary image of cowardice is preserved in Gauthier de Metz's *Image du monde* of the mid-thirteenth century in which pusillanimity, the sixth root of *Accide*, is typified by fear before a snail.¹⁵ The merging of the two traditions may be observed in a miniature from a late thirteenth-century *Ars d'amour, de vertu et de boneurté* showing two frightened men, one dropping his sword, flanking a hare and a snail to illustrate the chapter "ques choses sont a cremir et en ques choses nient cremir nest mie force" (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS. 9543, f. 117).¹⁶ A slightly later copy of the text retains the identical composition, followed in the chapter on *Vergogne* by a representation of two men armed with sticks confronting a snail, placed significantly in the center foreground, and a hare issuing from a more distant hillock (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS. 9548, ff. 97, 148).¹⁷ By the end of the thirteenth century, therefore, the snail was an established adjunct of the traditional *Ignavia* metaphor.

Reviewing briefly the principal attributes of the snail through the ages in an attempt to define its connotations in the mediaeval period, one finds it cited as an example of exaggerated mistrust in classical antiquity for carrying its house on its back for fear of thieves.¹⁸ Equated with the moon because of its alternating appearance and disappearance,¹⁹ it was endowed with mystical significance related to the theory of resurrection on the basis of the quantities of snail shells discovered in the vicinity of Merovingian tombs.²⁰ The physical characteristics of the snail which lent themselves to these and other symbolic interpretations received far lowlier treatment in popular folklore throughout the Middle Ages. Thus, the emergence from the shell was compared to a social climber of whom it was said: "C'est un limechon qui sort de sa coquille."²¹ For crawling on its stomach the snail was termed a coward and a parasite;²² for its illusory strength within its shell it was thoroughly despised, as appears from a reference to an Aristotelian proverb cited by Gunzon of Novare to counter an insult from the monks at Reichenau in an irate letter written shortly after the middle of the tenth century: "Sedens in conclavi monasterii cornutum se putat, secundum proverbium Aristotelis, qui ait: Limax in suo conclavi cornupeta sibi videtur, seque putat cursu timidis contendere damis."²³ The same thought underlies a late fifteenth-

¹⁴ A. Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art*, Studies of the Warburg Institute, x (London, 1939), pp. 75 ff.

¹⁵ *Histoire littéraire de la France*, xxiii (1853), pp. 294 ff., and F. Chavannes, *Le miroir du monde* (Lausanne, 1845), p. 1.

¹⁶ G. Gaspar and F. Lyna, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures (Paris, 1937), I, 205 ff.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209 ff.

¹⁸ O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig, 1913), II, 23.

¹⁹ M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1949), p. 150.

²⁰ E. Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne* (Paris, 1959), IV, 71-73. I am indebted for this reference and the preceding one to Mr Philippe Verdier.

²¹ P. J. Leroux, *Dictionnaire comique, satirique, critique* (Pamplona, 1876), II, 90.

²² J. Dejardin, *Dictionnaire des spots ou proverbes wallons* (Liège, 1891), II, pp. 129, 458.

²³ J. Havet, "Les proverbes d'Aristote en hexamètres latins," *Revue de Philologie*, XI (1887), 123-124.

century French riddle citing the snail as the strongest creature in the world.²⁴ Once established as a symbol of illusory courage, the snail became a creature to be hunted down and destroyed. In popular literature this theme of persecution can be followed from the *Roman de Renard* to the present-day version of the Mother Goose rhyme, "Four-and-twenty tailors went to kill a snail." Confrontation by a snail, therefore, represented a test of moral fortitude.²⁵

A most specific application of this test is recounted in literary sources (mostly of French origin) from the middle of the twelfth century on in the form of a tale told by the French at the expense of the Italians. Commenting on the deplorable passion for hunting and fighting on the part of the English, John of Salisbury in his *Polycraticus* of 1159 cites as no more ridiculous the alleged terror of Emilians and Ligurians at the sight of a snail:

Aemilianos et Ligures Galli derident dicentes eos testamenta conficere, viciniam convocare, armorum implorare praesidia, si finibus eorum testudo imminet quam oportet oppugnare. Quod ex eo componitur, quod eius numquam cuiusque certaminis casus invenit imperatos. Nostri vero quomodo ludibrii notas effugant, cum majori tumultu et aegriori sollicitudine et ampliore sumptu solemne bellum credant bestiis indicendum?²⁶

It is highly probable that John of Salisbury learned of this stigma during his sojourn in France from 1136 to 1149. Two generations later the same inference appears in Jacques de Vitry's description of the characteristics of the various nationalities at the University of Paris. The English are portrayed as heavy drinkers, the Flemish as gay and lavish revellers, the Lombards as avaricious, malicious, and cowardly (*imbelles*).²⁷ Equally unfavorable to the Lombards is an account by Odofredo, *magister* of law at Bologna, who was affiliated with the University of Paris from 1228 to 1234. Accusing the Lombards of ignorance for failing to wash their hands before meals and of boorishness for speaking out of turn, Odofredo reports as follows on Franco-Italian student relations: "... si pingere-tur de vili materia, ut faciunt ultramontani qui pingunt limacem in vituperiam italicorum, vel scorpiones in vituperiam ultramontanorum in pariete, de carbone, inconveniens esset quod paries cederet picture."²⁸ Odofredo's complaint against the defiling of university walls by mutually slanderous charcoal scrawls confirms the fact that by 1230 the snail had become an established vehicle in university circles for French ridicule of the Italians. Other references of a later date appear, for instance, in the *Somme le Roi* of 1279²⁹ and in Giovanni Villani's description of the desperate flight of the French in the campaign of Philip of Valois in 1320. Since Villani's sympathies as a Guelph were with the French, he sought to excuse

²⁴ E. Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France* (Paris, 1909), xii, 47.

²⁵ The weapons used to combat the snail are listed as follows in the Méon edition of the *Roman de Renard* (Paris, 1826), I, 130-131: sticks, maces, flails, axes, swords, and forks.

²⁶ Lib. I, cap. iv (ed. G. Webb [Oxford, 1909], p. 23). On the mediaeval interpretation of *testudo* as snail, see H. Schuchardt, "Franz. creuset u.s.w.," *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*, xxvi (1902), 324.

²⁷ *Historia occidentalis*, lib. ii.

²⁸ *Digest*, vi, i, 23. See N. Tamassia, "Odofredo," *Atti e Memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria*, xii (1894), 1-88.

²⁹ Cited in A. Tobler, "Assaillir la limace," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, iii (1879), 101.

their cowardly demeanor by the very legend commonly associated with their foe, a legend which he says was *recited and depicted* in France concerning Italian fear of the snail. By an adroit and totally implausible *tour de force* Villani claimed this fear to have been transferred to the French, causing them to panic at the sight of the Visconti banner, a coiled viper with a man in its jaws which at a distance resembled the configuration of a snail (Fig. 4):

E da notare una favola che si dice e dipigne per dispetto degli Italiani in Francia: e' dicono che' Lombardi hanno paura della lumaccia . . . Gl'ignoranti Franceschi credevano che quella insegna fosse per loro fatta, onde si recarono a grande onta, e forte ne parlaro in Francia del dispetto che aveano loro fatti i Lombardi . . .³⁰

With the exception of John of Salisbury, the historical and scholarly texts noted above allude specifically to Lombards in their mention of the snail-legend. The same is true in the other major group of literary sources containing references to this tale, French heroic epics. In fact, from the middle of the twelfth century on, Lombards are cited as prototypes of non-chivalrous comportment in general.³¹ Thus, in the *Roman de Thèbes*, composed shortly before 1150, the courage of a well-outfitted knight is emphasized by the following comparison (ll. 3312-3313): "Ne semble pas Lombart ne fol. Tot dreite porte sa lance."³² In the same vein the prowess of an ill-equipped knight at a tournament is derided in Gerbert de Montreuil's *Continuation de Perceval* (ll. 4405-4409):

Vous venez droit de Lombardie,
Moult par avez la char hardie,
Que tué avez la lymache;
Fu che de pichois ou de mache
K'avez mort la beste cornue?³³

The Lombard-snail connection is made once more in the early thirteenth century *Galiens-li-Restorès*:

(Mais) Pour vous ne fuiray pour plain pié que ie face.
Je ne suis pas Lombart qui fuit pour la lymaiche.³⁴

As these select examples indicate, allusions to the anti-Lombard stigma were by no means rare in French heroic epics.

The perpetuation of the theme was given further impetus by a poem, *De Lombardo et lumaca*, one of a host of pseudo-Ovidian works which appeared towards

³⁰ *Istorie fiorentine*, lib. ix, cap. cviii.

³¹ J. Bédier, *Les légendes épiques* (Paris, 1917), II, 209, and M. Zweifel, *Untersuchung über die Bedeutungsentwicklung Langobardus-Lombardus* (Halle, 1921), p. 72.

³² L. Constans, ed., *Société des Anciens Textes Français*, I (1890), 163.

³³ M. Williams, ed. (Paris, 1922), I, 136. Another pertinent reference appears in W. J. Roach, ed., *The Continuation of the Old French 'Perceval' of Chrétien de Troyes* (Philadelphia, 1950), II, 33, l. 1053. For an analogous conflict with a spider, see J. L. Weston and J. Bédier, "Tristram Ménestrel," *Romania*, xxv (1906), 529.

³⁴ E. Stengel, ed., *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen der romanischen Philologie*, LXXXIV (1890), Section CLXII, vv. 28-29, p. 307. Other references are cited in *Histoire littéraire de la France*, XXII (1852), 464, 507, 591, 648.

the end of the twelfth century particularly in England and France.³⁵ In this version a simple Lombard peasant is nonplussed at encountering a "heavily armed" snail, horned and well fortified. While the gods encourage him to fight the beast with promises of great rewards, his wife, appalled by her husband's recklessness, pleads with him for her sake and the children's not to embark on such a dangerous mission, which neither Hercules, Achilles, nor Hector would have dared undertake (Fig. 3). Despite her entreaties, the peasant follows the gods' advice and destroys the monster with his spear. A suitable reward for this feat, says the author, must be decided upon by lawyers.

This tale, which Manitius interpreted as a satire of peasant cowardice, may well have derived from the current mockery of Lombards attested to by the sources already mentioned. It is interesting to find a prose version of *De Lombardo et lumaca* in two thirteenth-century manuals for students of the "stile epistolare," where it appears with exemplary epistles from Ovid's *Heroides* to enliven the monotony of dictation practice.³⁶

From the combined evidence it is clear that the snail legend was widely circulated, especially in France, both in written form and doubtless also in oral tradition. It remains to be determined why the personification of cowardice by the obvious simile of fear before a snail was ascribed by the French to the Lombards.³⁷ The reason lies in an event of remarkably far-reaching consequences, the Lombards' catastrophic flight before Charlemagne in A.D. 772. The total unexpectedness and inexplicability of the Lombards' panic, completely contradictory to their customary ferocity in battle, served to glorify the heroic image of Charlemagne. Celebrated time and again, the Lombard *débâcle* was occasioned by Pope Hadrian II's appeal to Charlemagne for aid against Desiderius, king of the Lombards, who had seized certain papal territories.³⁸ Having rejected all proposals for peaceful settlement, Desiderius prepared for battle but, in sudden unaccountable panic, fled at the sight of the Frankish army without exchanging a blow. A graphic account of his mounting terror is preserved in *De Gestis Caroli Magni*, written by a monk of St Gall in the second half of the ninth century.³⁹ Four times the Lombard king anticipated Charlemagne's approach, each time becoming more tremulous. At first he was merely perturbed ("aestuare coepit"), then he longed for death ("mortisque desiderius") and expressed a longing to hide below ground, whereupon his noble adjutant Ogier, king of the Danes, also began to take fright. Finally, when Charlemagne appeared in full armor amidst his soldiers, the Lombards fled in terror and even the valiant Ogier fell in a dead faint. The full impact of this exploit on succeeding generations can be measured

³⁵ M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1931), p. 1037 and Novati, *op. cit.*, p. 143, n. 17, for a list of nine late mediaeval Italian versions of the text. See also P. Lehmann, *Pseudo-antike Literatur des Mittelalters* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 6.

³⁶ N. Valois, *De arte scribendi epistolas* (Paris, 1880), p. 43.

³⁷ For the precise connotations of the term "Lombard," see Zweifel, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 ff.

³⁸ The successive accounts of the battle in mediaeval chronicles have been traced by Bédier, *op. cit.*, pp. 198 ff.

³⁹ *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, II, 759-760.

by the number of historical accounts of the renowned flight to Pavia.⁴⁰

The triumph of the Frankish army became a *cause célèbre* also in the *chansons de geste*, which celebrated as one of the principal figures Desiderius's companion Ogier, mentioned in the *Chanson de Roland* as one of Charlemagne's faithful followers. Ogier's defection to the Lombards gave rise to a host of epic poems, the earliest of which existed already in the middle of the twelfth century.⁴¹ In the first extant text, dating from the early thirteenth century, the author points out an element of Lombard courage to defend Ogier's honor ("As premiers cops le firent ben Lumbart") before proceeding to place full blame for the disastrous outcome of the encounter on Desiderius alone:

Lunbart s'enfuient, niens est del retorner
Et Désier, qui les en fait aler,
Jusqu'à Pavie ne volrent arester;⁴²

Other French epics of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century contain analogous descriptions which served to regenerate and crystallize the concept of Lombard cowardice.⁴³ At what date the snail became part of this legend is difficult to determine, although the association of Lombards and snails doubtless existed in oral tradition some time before its transcription towards the middle of the twelfth century.

It still remains to be determined whether the rash of marginal snail-combat representations between about 1290 and 1325 was motivated by the host of literary references to the theme between about 1150 and 1325 or whether the marginal motif was created independent of the literary tradition as a commentary on human cowardice. In dealing with this problem three questions come to mind. First, why was the snail-combat depicted over and over again when many analogous literary themes were rarely, if ever, represented? Then too, the virtually simultaneous appearance of the motif in France, Flanders, and England runs counter to the propensity for regionalism in marginal iconography. Finally, should the concentration of the motif in manuscripts prior to 1310 be ascribed to coincidence or to a strong popular reaction current at the time?

The answers to all three questions may be sought in a development outside both the literary and artistic spheres, namely the establishment of Lombard usurers and pawnbrokers throughout northern Europe in the course of the thirteenth century.⁴⁴ Their monopoly of these professions by the end of the century attests to the rapidity of their expansion in the vital commercial centers in France, the

⁴⁰ For the re-use of the idea of the Lombards' flight to Pavia, see vv. 2025 ff. in *Aymeri de Narbonne*, ed. L. Demaison (Paris, 1887), II, 87.

⁴¹ C. Voretzsch, *Über die Sage von Ogier dem Dänen und die Entstehung der 'Chevalerie Ogier'* (Halle, 1891), pp. 70-77.

⁴² vv. 5137 and 5380-5382. J. Barrois, ed., *La chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche, par Rambert de Paris du XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1842), pp. 210, 220.

⁴³ Zweifel, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 ff.

⁴⁴ An analysis of the Lombards' expansion in the Low Countries and excellent bibliographical references appear in R. de Roover's *Money, Banking, and Credit in Mediaeval Bruges* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1948).

Low Countries, and England. At this time, too, the terms "lombard" and "usurer" became synonymous in documents and literary sources and remained interchangeable for the remainder of the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Violent protests by churchmen and laymen alike against the ever-widening sphere of the Lombards' influence were voiced with remarkable international unanimity. Among the notable critics were Matthew Paris, Geoffroy de Paris, Dante, Boccaccio, Froissart, and Jan Boendale — to cite but a few.⁴⁶ While the strong antagonism towards the Lombards was originally probably based in part on their function as papal agents for the collection of revenue abroad, it was self-perpetuating by the very nature of their profession. For, despite innumerable complaints against their rapacity and deceitfulness, the Lombards' services were constantly in demand. With the exception of church ornaments and regalia, almost any object from house furnishings to priceless jewels could be pawned. Examples of the latter appear in two of the relatively rare extant documents for this type of transaction which record the pawning in 1278 of a gold eagle and two precious chalices in Valenciennes by the duke of Burgundy⁴⁷ and the redemption in 1334 of the crown jewels of Flanders.⁴⁸ It was claimed, in fact, that as long as there was any hope of making a profit the Lombards would deal in anything, even one's health.⁴⁹

Officially repudiated, although actually encouraged to practice their profession, the Lombards were deprecated *a priori* as foreigners.⁵⁰ They did not hold full rights of citizenship, including the right to bear arms, a restriction which may have abetted the notion of their military ineffectuality so widely propagated in the literary sources already mentioned. From the assembled evidence the three questions regarding the origin of the marginal illustration can now be answered as follows: the predilection for the literary snail combat theme can be explained by the manifest current anti-Lombard sentiment; the rapid diffusion of the motif reflects the international character of the Lombards' professional activities; and finally, the concentration of the motif in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts mirrors the intense reaction to a current development which gradually lost its appeal along with its novelty. What better means for expressing popular opinion than by an amusing drawing in the margin of a manuscript which could be interpreted at will as a general representation of cowardice or as a specific allusion to Lombards, in some cases serving perhaps as a reminder of an object pawned or to be redeemed by the original owner of the manuscript.

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⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁶ *Historia Anglorum*, II, year 1235; A. Diverres, *La chronique métrique attribuée à Geoffroy de Paris* (Strasbourg, 1956), p. 151, vv. 3121 ff.; *Inferno*, xi, 50; *Decameron*, Giorn. I, nov. 1; *Chronicle* (London, 1901), p. 336; A. Snellaert, *Nederlandsche Gedichten uit de veertiende eeuw van Jan Boendale* (Brussels, 1869), p. 421.

⁴⁷ P. Morel, *Les Lombards dans la Flandre française et le Hainaut* (Lille, 1908), p. 59.

⁴⁸ De Roover, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁴⁹ A. de Montaiglon, *Recueil de poésies françaises des XV^e et XVI^e siècles* (Paris, 1856), IV, 139.

⁵⁰ "Nous ne voudrions pas cependant qu'on se fit des illusions sur les Lombards: leur réputation fut toujours détestable" (C. Piton, *Les Lombards en France et à Paris* [Paris, 1891], I, 7).

APPENDIX

Manuscripts Included in this Study

Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale.

MS. 229, Breviary, St Vaast, late thirteenth century.

Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.

MS. 45, Psalter for Leonardo de' Fieschi, Cambrai, late thirteenth century.

MS. 87, Hours, Franco-Flemish, early fourteenth century.

MS. 90, Hours, north French, early fourteenth century.

MS. 109, Breviary, Franco-Flemish, about 1300.

Belvoir Castle, Collection of Duke of Rutland.

Psalter for Edmond de Laci (?), English, before 1258.

Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale.

MS. 329-41, Lives of Saints, Cologne, about 1320.

MS. II 988, Baudouin d'Avesnes, *Le trésor des histoires*, 2 v., Belgian, first half of the fourteenth century.

MS. 9411-26, *Recueil de poésies morales*, Flemish, early fourteenth century.

MS. 10607, Psalter of Gui de Dampierre, Flemish, late thirteenth century.

Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale.

MS. 102-103, Breviary for St-Sépulcre of Cambrai, late thirteenth century.

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum.

MS. 298, "Metz Pontifical" for Reynaud de Bar, northeast French, early fourteenth century.

Cambridge, Trinity College.

MS. B.11.22, Hours, Flemish, early fourteenth century.

Copenhagen, Royal Library.

MS. Gl. Kgl. S. 3384.8°, Psalter, Flemish, first quarter of the fourteenth century.

MS. Ny K. S. 41.8°, Psalter, Franco-Flemish, about 1300.

Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale.

MS. 193, Hours, St-Omer use, early fourteenth century.

London, British Museum.

Add. MS. 36684, Hours, St-Omer use, after 1318.

Add. MS. 49622, Gorleston Psalter, East Anglian, early fourteenth century.

Harley MS. 6563, Hours, English 1310-20.

Royal MS 2 B VII, "Queen Mary's Psalter," English, first quarter of the fourteenth century.

Royal MS 10 E IV, "Smithfield Decretals," English, first quarter of the fourteenth century.

Yates Thompson MS. 8, Breviary of Marguerite de Bar, Verdun use, 1302-04.

New Haven, Yale University Library.

Lancelot du Lac, Picard, late thirteenth century.

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library.

MS. 88, Psalter and Hours, Metz use, about 1300.

Oxford, Bodleian Library.

Douse MS. 366, "Ormesby Psalter," East Anglian, late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

Oxford, Jesus College.

MS. 40, Psalter, English, early fourteenth century.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

MS. fr. 776, *Tristram*, north French, late thirteenth century.

MS. latin 3893, Decretals of Gratian, French, 1314.

MS. latin 14284, Hours. Théroutanne use, about 1300.